Who Presided Over the Keys?
Heber J. Grant or John W. Woolley

Overview

This question involves several issues –

What is necessary to preside over the keys?
How are the keys of the Priesthood lost? (by the Church)
In what way didn't Heber J. Grant qualify to hold the keys?
In what way did John W. Woolley qualify?

Study Suggestions -

Begin your study with prayer, praying for God to reveal the truth to you through His Spirit.

Read the following passages (included with this guide) -

1882 Revelation
Losing the Priesthood article
Heber J. Grant article
John W. Woolley biography
Witnesses of John W. Woolley's testimony

If you have not done so already also read -

Authority Study Guide 4 – Keys & Celestial Plural Marriage
Authority Study Guide 5 – The 1886 Ordinations

Answer the study questions – on the next page

Be conscious of the Spirit throughout your studies, and close with prayer.

Make a list of any additional questions you might have,
to share with the Seventy who gave you this guide.

Next Study Guide -

We will look at the lives and missions of Lorin Woolley to Joseph W. Musser, and at the Fundamentalist 'split'.

Questions to Ponder

What is necessary to preside over the Priesthood?

Doesn't contradict the teachings of predecessors - esp. Joseph Smith

"If any man preach any other gospel than that which I have preached he shall be cursed."
Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 368.

"How, it may be asked, was this known to be a bad angel? by his contradicting a former revelation."
Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 214.

"The gospel in its simplicity, is to be found in the revelations, the teachings of the prophet and the early leaders of the Church. We shall make no mistake if we follow them."
J. Rueben Clark (Counsellor to Heber J. Grant), Immortality & Eternal Life, p. 156.

Receives and performs all the ordinances

And the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom shall not be taken from my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., through the means I have appointed, while he liveth, inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances.
Doctrine & Covenants 64:5.

"The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelation, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God"
Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 337

"Can any man or set of men officiate in dispensing the laws and administering the ordinances of the Kingdom of God or of the kingdoms and governments of the world legally, without first obeying those laws and submitting to those ordinances themselves?... no man has authority to officiate in the ordinances of heavenly or earthly governments only so far as he has obeyed them himself."
Brigham Young, October 8th, 1854.

Lives and perpetuates Plural Celestial Marriage – *See Study Guide 4*

"When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church, that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them and given to others."
John Taylor, 7 June 1866, Journal of Discourses 11:221-222

How do we lose the Priesthood & its keys?

Changing the method of Priesthood conferral

"The conferring of the Priesthood should precede and accompany ordination to office, unless it is possessed by previous bestowal and ordination. Surely a man cannot possess an appendage to the Priesthood without possessing the Priesthood itself, which he cannot obtain unless it be authoritatively conferred upon him."

Joseph F. Smith, March1901, Improvement Era 4:394.

Changing the ordinances

"Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the Priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.

... Where there is no change of Priesthood, there is no change of ordinances, says Paul."

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308, see Hebrews 7:12.

"It signifies then that the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing."

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 169.

Revoking Plural Marriage

"The entire Church and all of its Priesthood, with the Presidency at the head of it might motion and vote against this principle until doomsday with just one effect, (namely) to vote themselves away from the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, from the possession of their Priesthood, and to find themselves very speedily outside the Church and Kingdom of God; while he would raise up others that would honor and observe his law."

Charles W. Penrose, Deseret News, Editorial, 1 April 1885.

Friendship with the world

"There is nothing that would soon weaken my hope and discourage me as to see this people in full fellowship with the world, and receive no more persecution from them because they are one with them. In such an event, we might bid farewell to the Holy Priesthood with all its blessings, privileges and aids to exaltations, principalities and powers in the eternities of the Gods."

Brigham Young, 8 April 1862, Journal of Discourses 10:32 (see 4:38 & 10:273).

"There is nothing short of complete apostasy, a complete denial of every principle we have received, a throwing away of the Holy Priesthood, that can save us from persecution. When this takes place, the chief features of the Gospel are obliterated."

George Q. Cannon, 15 June 1881, Journal of Discourses 22:373.

See the Losing the Priesthood article included with this study guide

Comparison of Heber J. Grant & John W. Woolley

Similarities

Heber J. Grant — John W. Woolley

Called by John Taylor
Ordained an Apostle
Required to live Plural Marriage

Differences

Heber J. Grant	John W. Woolley
Never knew Joseph Smith	Knew Joseph as a child and as resurrected being
Ordained by George Q. Cannon	Ordained by John Taylor personally
Failed to perpetuate plural marriage after the Manifesto	Continued to perpetuate plural marriage after the Manifesto
Tried to change ordinances and laws	Kept ordinances and laws alive
Sought friendship with the world	Persecuted by the world & Church

List of Changes Under Grant's Presidency

Plural Marriage ended completely
Consecration ended completely (replaced with welfare program)
Priesthood conferral and ordination changed
Holy Garments changed
Temple mortgaged – Church in bondage to world
World ceases persecution
Persecuted polygamists
Taught follow Church President even if wrong

These are documented in the article "Heber J. Grant – Prophet or President?"

1882 Revelation to John Taylor

13 October 1882
(Unpublished Revelations 83)

Thus saith the Lord to the Twelve, and to the Priesthood and people of my Church:
2 Let my servants George Teasdale and Heber J. Grant be appointed to fill the vacancies in the Twelve, that you may be fully organized and prepared for the labours devolving upon you, for you have a great work to perform;
3 And then proceed to fill up the presiding quorum of Seventies, and assist in organizing that body of my Priesthood who are your co-laborers in the ministry.
4 You may appoint Seymour B. Young to fill up the vacancy in the presiding quorum of Seventies, if he will conform to my law:
5 For it is not meet that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood;
6 And, then proceed forthwith and call to your aid any assistance that you may require from among the Seventies to assist you in your labors in introducing and maintaining the Gospel, among the Lamanites throughout the land.
7 And then let High Priests be selected under the direction of the First Presidency to preside over the various organizations that shall exist among this people;
8 That these who receive the Gospel may be taught in the doctrines of my Church and in the ordinances and laws thereof, and also in the things pertaining to my Zion and my Kingdom, saith the Lord, that they may be one with you in my Church and in my Kingdom.
9 Let the Presidency of my Church be one in all things; and let the Twelve also be one in all things; and let them all be one with me and am one with the Father.
10 And let the High Priests organize themselves, and purify themselves, and prepare themselves for this labor and for all other labors that they may be called upon to fulfill.
11 And let the Presidents of Stakes also purify themselves, and this Priesthood and people of the Stakes over which they preside,
12 And organize the Priesthood in the various stakes according to my law, in all the various departments thereof, in the High Councils, in the Elders Quorums, and in the Bishops and their Councils, and in the Quorums of Priests, Teachers and Deacons, that every Quorum may be fully organized according to the order of my Church;
13 And, then, let them inquire into the standing and fellowship of all that hold my holy Priesthood in their several Stakes;
14 And if they find these that are unworthy let them remove them, except they repent;
15 For my Priesthood, whom I have called and whom I have sustained and honored, shall honor me and obey my laws, and the laws of my Holy Priesthood, or they shall not be considered worthy to hold my Priesthood, saith the Lord.
16 And let my Priesthood humble themselves before me, and seek not their own will but my will;
17 For if my Priesthood whom I have chosen, and called, and endowed with the Spirit and gifts of their several callings, and with the powers thereof do not acknowledge me I will not acknowledge them, saith the Lord; for I will be honored and obeyed by my Priesthood.
18 And, then, I call upon my Priesthood, and upon all of my people to repent of their sins and shortcomings, of their covetousness, and pride, and self will, and of all their iniquities wherein they sin against me;
19 And to seek with all humility to fulfill my law, as my Priesthood, my Saints, and my people;
20 And I call upon the heads of families to put their houses in order according to the law of God, and attend to the various duties and responsibilities appointed therewith, and to purify themselves before me, and to purge out iniquity from their households.

21 And I will bless and be with you, saith the Lord,
22 And ye shall gather together in your holy places wherein ye assemble to call upon me, and ye shall ask for such things as are right,
23 And I will hear your prayers, and my Spirit and power shall be with you, and my blessing shall be upon you, upon your families, your dwellings, and your households, upon your flocks and herds and fields, your orchards and vineyards, and upon all that pertain to you;
24 And you shall be my people and I will be your God;
25 And your enemies shall not have dominion over you, for I will preserve you and confound them, saith the Lord,
26 And they shall not have power nor dominion over you;
27 For my word shall go forth, and my work shall be accomplished, and my Zion shall be established, and my rule and my power and my dominion shall prevail among my people, and all nations shall yet acknowledge me. Even so, Amen.

John Taylor Papers, Church Historians Office

Living Plural Celestial Marriage Necessary to Presiding Over the Priesthood

Joseph Smith

An angel of God ... told him [Joseph Smith] that, unless he moved forward and establish plural marriage, his Priesthood would be taken from him.

Eliza R. Snow, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, p. 69-70.

Heber was told by Joseph that if he did not do this [take another wife] he would lose his Apostleship.

Life of Heber C. Kimball, Orson F. Whitney, p. 336 (1888 edition).

When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church, that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them and given to others.

John Taylor, 7 June 1866, Journal of Discourses 11:221-222.

John Taylor

If we do not embrace that principle soon, the keys will be turned against us. If we do not keep the same law our Heavenly Father has kept we cannot go with him. A man obeying a lesser law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law.

John Taylor, October 10th, 1882, Life of Wilford Woodruff, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542.

This situation was settled in an early day case where Heber J. Grant, as President of the Tooele Stake, attempted to correct Brother Samuel Woolley. Brother Grant was not living the law, while Brother Woolley was. The latter refused to receive instructions from Brother Grant, claiming immunity because the President was not living as high a law as he was. Brother Grant took the question up with his file leaders, President John Taylor and counselors. They instructed him that Brother Woolley was right, since he (Brother Grant) was not living or abiding in the law, he was not qualified to direct Brother Woolley who was faithfully abiding in that law. Thus, at the present time, few of the general authorities, stake presidents, or bishops are qualified to Preside over the Priesthood of God.

Joseph Musser Journal, p. 68-9.

Joseph F. Smith

Jerome Sweet claimed that he "went to a special priesthood meeting where Joseph F. Smith was the speaker and he said that men holding positions in the priesthood should either marry in polygamy or they should step down and let someone who would marry have the position."

Isn't One Wife Enough, Kimball Young, p. 107.

Note: There is a more longer compilation of quotes in Authority Study Guide 4

Losing the Priesthood

Another look at John Taylor's 1886 prophecy
regarding the validity of the Priesthood in the Church

In the Autumn of 1886, President John Taylor predicted that there would one day be a question over validity of the Priesthood held by many of the Saints:

> "I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at that time of the seventh President, and there would be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them."[1]

President Taylor's worry it seemed was also shared by his counselor, George Q. Cannon. According to one witness, Canon stated in a meeting with the Saints, that "The day will come when men's Priesthood and authority will be called into question, and you will find out that there will be hundreds who have no Priesthood, but believe they hold it, they holding only an office in the Church."[2]

Although no contemporary accounts of these particular statements, but they are not dissimilar from other warnings and prophecies made by other Church leaders during the same era. For example in 1884 President cautioned the Saints that "the time will come when it will be necessary for every man to trace the line in which he has received the Priesthood that he exercises. ... I believe this is of extreme importance, ... Every man should be careful on this point, to know where he gets his Priesthood; that it has come to him clean and undefiled, legitimately;"[3]

These quotes raise many issues, such as what would cause some of the Saints to lose the Priesthood or give it incorrectly? how could such a situation arise in which this could occur, and some Saints not know about it? and how can we ensure that the Priesthood we hold is legitimate? Fortunately the Lord's servants have left answers to all of these questions, although there are several different viewpoints on these matters which we will try to cover in this treatment of the subject.

Priesthood Conferral

President Taylor's prophecy has traditionally been interpreted amongst many Fundamentalism and their critics to refer only to the issue of changes in the wording of Priesthood ordinations. This was because he spoke of the Priesthood not being properly conferred, and he spoke of the prophesy coming to fulfillment during the time of the seventh President of the Church, during whose tenure the method of ordination certainly was altered.

Certainly, Church leaders such as Brigham Young stated the importance of conferring the Priesthood before ordaining to an office therein. "Do not forget to confer the High Priesthood",[4] he instructed in 1877. In doing so he was following the president laid down with the restoration of the Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in 1829, when John the Baptist spoke the words, "Upon my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron."[5]

However those who oppose the necessity of conferring the Priesthood have pointed out several Journal entries, which seem to chronicle ordination done early in this dispensation which did not use the word 'confer', as well as statements from some early General Authorities in which they expressed that they believed it didn't matter if a conferral was done or not. Although it is quite probable that the reason why the diaries of early members did not contain the term 'confer' is because either they were primarily interested in recording the office they had been ordained to, and just expected that others who might read their account would assume a conferral had taken place. This does not explain, however, the remarks of Church authorities who did not think conferral was necessary.

President George Q. Cannon has been cited as someone who would have agreed with Heber J. Grant's

1 27 September 1886, John W. Woolley home, Centreville, Utah
2 1901, Draper, Utah, as related by Daniel R. Bateman, Ballard-Jensen Correspondence
3 18 October 1884, Journal of Discourses 26:24
4 Deseret News, 6 June 1877
5 29 May 1829, D&C 13:1

alteration of the method of ordination,[6] yet he stated that "care should be taken to bestow the authority", and gave the conferral of Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver by John the Baptist as an ideal method of ordination.[7]

Of course we could conclude that those who disagreed with the need for conferral were just sharing an opinion of theirs, that had no effect on general practice of ordination amongst the Saints. Alternatively, we might think that they were wrong, or that it is due to ordinations they may have performed (without conferring) that the situation arose that President Taylor prophesied about. Such explanations do not seem to cover all of the accounts and statements. But there are aspects to this subject which have sometimes been overlooked.

Let us begin with our concept of the Priesthood and its offices. When Joseph Smith received the Aaronic Priesthood there was no indication that he was ordained to any office in it, and the Lord revealed to him on a couple of occasions that "offices in the Church are appendages to the Priesthood."[8] Or, in other words, that the Priesthood can exist apart from an appointment to a specific office or calling in the Church.

At least one Church authority, President Charles W. Penrose, had a different view on this matter. One LDS scholar summarised a sermon he gave in 1921 that touched on the this issue, "President Penrose conveyed the impression that priesthood does not exist apart from priesthood offices."[9]

This view was undoubtedly what led him to state a few years earlier, "We have been making a mistake in ordinations. We have been conferring the priesthood, and it ought not to be done. If we confer the Priesthood on a man, we give him all the offices and callings in the Church. We should ordain directly to the office in the Priesthood."[10]

In that same year the First Presidency (which he was part of) made its first statement regarding ordaining without conferring,[11] and formally instructed the Priesthood in line with this view in 1921.[12]

It seems before 1919 it was understood that a person being ordained was being given the Priesthood, yet after that point it was no longer certain, as the view had begun to take hold no-one (apart from perhaps the Church President) had the Priesthood, but only had offices in the Church. The understanding of what the Priesthood was and who could hold it had changed fundamentally, from being ordained into the Melchizedek Priesthood to being ordained into the Church. Possibly it was because of this, that many receiving ordination under such situation might have indeed only received what they were promised - an office in the Church, without the Priesthood itself. In this way the change in ordination procedure could have been more of a sign of the prophecy being fulfilled rather than the only reason.

All of this happened despite Joseph F. Smith's statement, as Church President in 1901, that conferring should precede ordination.[13] Whatever ambiguity may have existed before President Smith made it clear what method he expected in the Church, only to have it reversed a couple of decades later.

Even if ordinations had been done incorrectly beforehand, President Smith set a standard, from which Heber J. Grant deviated, and opposed the explicit instructions of his predecessor on how ordinations were to be done. If differences in conferring had not invalidated ordinations before, one might argue that they did after President Smith made the matter clear.

Part 2

Having treated the question of what part Priesthood ordinations may have played in John Taylor's prophesy questioning the validity of many of the Saint's authority, we need to look past the assumption it was fulfilled (or was even primarily) because of that issue. There were many other reasons and situations which the early prophets and apostles warned could lead to many – if not most – of the Saints losing the Priesthood or its power.

Celestial (Plural) Marriage – The Law of the Priesthood

One area of great importance to this issue was that of Celestial (or Plural) Marriage. Most Latter-day Saints

6 In Brian C. Hales, Is Fundamentalism Fundamental?
7 Juvenile Instructor 31:174-5, 1896
8 28 March 1835, D&C 107:5 & D&C 84:29-30
9 Maxine Hanks, Women and Authority, Ch.2, p.39; see General Conference, April 1921, p. 108
10 Stake Quarterly Conference, Utah Stake, Provo, Utah, 1919, as recollected by Daniel R. Peay.
11 1919, in the Appendix of Gospel Doctrine by Joseph F. Smith
12 23 April 1921 (see also Missionary Handbooks after that time)
13 1901, Improvement Era 4:394

today might not easily see the correlation though, as they may think that it was practiced just to increase the number of Church members or as a trial of faith. Indeed it certainly was a trial and test of faith for those who lived it, but it was also an essential part of the faith of those who believed it to be a true principle.

The Latter-day Saints before the 1890s believed it to be "a necessity to man's highest exaltation in the life to come."[14] as the First Presidency of the time put it, and it was called the "law of the Priesthood"[15] in the revelation which Joseph received on the subject in 1843. The Saints were also taught it was part of the restoration of the Gospel, that it was needed for God's kingdom to progress, and that through it God sent his choicest spirits. It has been a source of controversy ever since, and an important principle in the issue of Priesthood authority.

Joseph was told by God for instance that if he did not proceed with establishing Plural Marriage that "his Priesthood would be taken from him."[16] Those to whom he revealed that law were put under the same obligation, as John Taylor relates, "When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church, that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them and given to others."[17] Heber was told by Joseph that if he did not take another wife he would lose his Apostleship.[18]

The word of the Lord was explicit upon this point; "It is not meet that men who will not abide My law shall preside over My Priesthood;"[19] As John Taylor clarified it; "A man obeying a lesser law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law."[20]

Thus, a man's Priesthood can be effected by what laws and commandments he refuses to live, and officiating in some offices is dependent upon fulfilling obligations the Lord has laid down to qualify those holding those callings. The Church and its apostles recognised this, and warned the Saints of the results of rejecting this law, and the effect it could have on the Priesthood -

> "What would be necessary to bring about the result nearest the hearts of the opponents of 'Mormonism', more properly termed the Gospel of the Son of God? Simply to renounce, abrogate or apostatize from the new and everlasting covenant of marriage in its fulness. Were the Church to do that as an entirety God would reject the Saints as a body. The authority would be withdrawn, with its gifts and powers, and there would be no more heavenly recognition of the administrations among the people. The heavens would permanently withdraw themselves, and the Lord would raise up another people of greater valor and stability, for his work must, according to His unalterable degrees, go forward ..."[21]

> "The entire Church and all of its Priesthood, with the Presidency at the head of it might motion and vote against this principle until doomsday with just one effect, (namely) to vote themselves away from the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, from the possession of their Priesthood, and to find themselves very speedily outside the Church and Kingdom of God; while he would raise up others that would honor and observe his law."[22]

Thus, those who sustained such a course (and still do oppose His laws), have placed themselves outside of God's approval, without Him recognising their Priesthood, as He works instead with those who will honour His laws.

Changing Ordinances = Changing Priesthood

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14 *First Presidency & Twelve, Petition for Amnesty, 19 December 1891.*
"The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy." *(Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, Vol.11, p.268 - p.269, 19 August 1866)*

15 "I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was." (D&C 132:28, 58, 61, 64)

16 Eliza R. Snow, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, p. 69-70

17 7 June 1866, Journal of Discourses 11:221-222

18 Life of Heber C. Kimball, Orson F. Whitney, p. 336, 1888 edition

19 Revelation to John Taylor, October 13th, 1882, Church Historians Office

20 John Taylor, October 10th, 1882, Life of Wilford Woodruff, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542

21 Charles W. Penrose, Deseret Evening News, April 23rd, 1885

22 Deseret News, Editorial, 1 April 1885

There is another area in which a persons Priesthood is affected and can be invalidated, and that is when they change ordinances from the pattern God reveals them, or assist in performing them in this altered fashion. From this point the power of the Priesthood begins to lessen, until all of its administrations are no longer valid. Joseph Smith was explicit on this point: "If there is no change of ordinances, there is no change of Priesthood."[23] So it follows, that if ordinances change, so does the Priesthood of those who administer them.

As the Prophet Joseph also put clearly, "Where there is no change of Priesthood, there is no change of ordinances."[24] The fact that ordinances have changed substantiates the argument that the Priesthood has been effected and lost through this.[25] The Prophet warned that this could happen and the consequences for those involved when he stated, "the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed; otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing."[26]

Some of the Saints may wonder what else has changed besides Celestial (plural) Marriage. Sadly they are unlikely to ever read in their Church manuals or even hear in General Conference anymore about the Law of Adoption, Rebaptism (for health and other reasons), Mother's Blessing, Prayer Circles in the home, or how the Endowment has changed substantially, and Priesthood offices and callings have been removed. Although some might still wonder "Why can't the Priesthood continue as it once did when ordinances change?" Brigham Young answered this beginning with a question for them -

> "Can any man or set of men officiate in dispensing the laws and administering the ordinances of the Kingdom of God or of the kingdoms and governments of the world legally, without first obeying those laws and submitting to those ordinances themselves?... no man has authority to officiate in the ordinances of heavenly or earthly governments only so far as he has obeyed them himself."[27]

Why have such changes happened? They happened for the same reason in all dispensations, because many of the Saints want an easier life and to be more accepted by the world, no matter what the cost. As the First Presidency admitted after the Church stopped living Celestial (Plural) Marri age, that the Saints had done so, "To be at peace with the Government and in harmony with their fellow citizens who were not of their faith and to share in the confidence of the Government and people, our people have voluntarily put aside something which all their lives they have believed to be a sacred principle."[28]

Popularity with the World & Priesthood – Can They Co-Exist?

When the Saints entered the Salt Lake valley, they saw it as an escape from the persecution that had plagued them from even before Joseph Smith began translating the gold plates. They had seen so many of their so-called friends turn traitors too many times, they had lost their homes, and some had lost their lives, but had come to build up Deseret in the hope that they would be far enough away from Babylon physically and emotionally to be able to build up Zion. Brother Brigham had this same hope, but realised that popularity and riches had tempted the Saints before and could again, and gave them this warning about such a possibility: "When we see the time that we can willingly strike hands and have full fellowship with those who despise the Kingdom of God, know ye then that the Priesthood of the Son of God is out of your possession."[29]

This was not the only occasion he made such a stark warning, or lamented this possibility - "There is nothing that would soon weaken my hope and discourage me as to see this people in full fellowship with the world, and receive no more persecution from them because they are one with them. In such an event, we might bid farewell to the Holy Priesthood with all its blessings, privileges and aids to exaltations, principalities and powers in the eternities of the Gods."[30]

He pointed out the simple fact that popularity and priesthood cannot fully co-exist, as in order to gain popularity you have to sacrifice true principles, and when that happens the priesthood is lost with them. Many

23 2 July 1839, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 158
24 11 June 1843, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308
25 For the Priesthood being changed, there is made the necessity a change also of the law. (Paul, Hebrews 7:12)
26 5 October 1840, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 169, History of the Church 4:209.
27 Brigham Young, October 8th, 1854.
28 Petition of Amnesty to Pres. B.F. Harrison , Messages of the First Presidency, Vol.3, p.229+
29 Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 10:273
30 Brigham Young, 8 April 1862, Journal of Discourses 10:32 (see 4:38)

might argue, however, that such a day has not yet come, and the Saints are still subject to the rejection of the world. While we may occasionally hear of some prejudices that still continue, the hate once reserved for the Mormons has long since subsided amongst most people in America (if not the world), as President Heber J. Grant noticed in his day -

> "My greatest happiness I find in the goodwill and friendship that has developed among all classes of people at home and abroad toward the LDS church during my lifetime. In place of early-day persecution and bitterness we now enjoy high regard and happy associations with all denominations."[31]

This situation could not have come without some cost being paid, without us downplaying or removing some of the beliefs and practices the world once found so offensive. James agreed that "friendship of the world is enmity with God;"[32] and Jesus (his brother) also taught that, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."[33]

We have already detailed some of the changes that occurred that led to this situation, and President George Q. Cannon spells out in detail what the results of such a course can only be - "There is nothing short of complete apostasy, a complete denial of every principle we have received, a throwing away of the Holy Priesthood, that can save us from persecution. When this takes place, the chief features of the Gospel are obliterated."[34]

We must remember though that the Lord has assured us though that the Gospel was restored for the last time, and so will never be taken away again. Likewise the authority to administer those ordinances must remain, and there must be a people upon the earth who maintain them in the very way God gave them.

"The Priesthood will never be taken away" affirmed Joseph Smith.[35] This does not mean however that the Church as a body will always have the fullness of the Priesthood available to the general membership. President J. Reuben Clark put it plainly; "The Priesthood can exist without the Church, but the Church cannot exist without the Priesthood."[36] Thus the Priesthood can act independently.

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31 Heber J. Grant, Salt Lake Tribune, 22 November 1938.
32 James 4:4
33 John 15:18
34 George Q. Cannon, 15 June 1881, Journal of Discourses 22:373.
35 Millennial Star 8:139
36 J. Reuben Clark, March 1936, Improvement Era p. 134

Heber J. Grant – Prophet of God?

or just President of the Church?

At the death of President Joseph F. Smith the LDS Church stood at a crossroads. He was the last Church leader alive to have known the Prophet Joseph, and was the last prophet at the head of the Church who lived Plural Marriage whilst in that calling. With his passing came the end of an era. Who could fill his shoes?

The most senior Apostle at the death of Joseph F. Smith was John W. Young. He had been ordained an Apostle in 1855[1], 27 years before Heber J. Grant, who was next most senior. But Elder Young was never called to the Quorum of Twelve, it seems he wasn't considered for succession a candidate by the rest of the Twelve, and he didn't seem to seek or contest Grant's appointment. This may surprise many Church members who may have assumed that all the Apostles are members of the Quorum of the Twelve, and that there has ever been any question – even amongst the Apostles – as to who was qualified to lead.

Since the presidency of Lorenzo Snow, the Church had filled the office of Church President automatically after the death of the previous President,[2] and so the question of who would be the next President was already decided by seniority in the Quorum of Twelve. President Brigham Young, however, made it clear that a man being President of the Church didn't necessarily make them Prophet, and that God calls prophets, but that the people appoint Presidents of the Church.[3]

To answer the question of who succeeded President Smith as prophet and holder of the keys of the Priesthood we will look at the man most Latter-day Saints believe fulfilled that role – Heber Jeddy Grant.

Heber was the son of Brigham Young's counselor, Jedediah Grant, and was born 22 Nov 1856. His father, however, died when he was still a baby. Even as a youth he became an effective businessman, and although his mother had hopes of him becoming a leader of the Church he told her at the time to "get it out of your head ... I do not want to be an Apostle! ... I do not want to be anything but a business man!"[4] Yet he found himself being given Priesthood responsibilities beyond his years from the age of 15 when he was ordained a Seventy, and by the time he was 23 he was called as a Stake President.

Yet despite perhaps having the emotional maturity of such a high calling at such a young age, there is some question over whether he had the necessary spiritual maturity. This is illustrated by a conversation he had with Joseph F. Smith (who was then a member of the First Presidency). Heber had confided in Joseph that he could not seem to speak with the Spirit, to which President Smith asked him if he knew the gospel was true. Grant admitted "No, I do not know it!"[5] Smith hoped to release him after hearing this, and coincidentally the majority of the members in his stake actually voted not to sustain Heber,[6] however, he somehow managed to remain in his position.

It is important to remember that during this era of the Church's history, Plural Marriage was not just recommended, but mandated for Church leaders. It was a "law of the Priesthood" that was considered essential to exaltation. In light of this it is interesting to learn of a particular case that came before him whilst he was a Stake President. It seems that some time between 1880 and 1882 President Grant had some disagreement with Bishop Samuel Woolley, and the Bishop objected to Heber trying to correct him, because Heber was still monogamous and Woolley was living a higher law, and therefore outside of his jurisdiction.

We'll take up the story from an account given by the son of the Assistant Church Historian at the time: "Brother Grant took the question up with his file leaders, President John Taylor and counselors. They instructed him that Brother Woolley was right, since he (Brother Grant) was not living or abiding in the law, he was not

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1 Born 1 October 1844 in Nauvoo. Son of Brigham Young, who ordained him, 22 November 1855 (at age 11). Re-ordained 4 February 1864, and made an assistant councilor to the First Presidency (although not publicly sustained until 8 April 1873). Became a councilor to the Quorum of Twelve, 4 September 1877. Resigned as Counselor and released, 3-6 October 1891 (reasons for resignation DNW 10 Oct 1891, p. 508). Died 11 February 1924 in New York (considered a worthy Latter-day Saint at time of death).

2 On the 5th of April 1900 it was decided that seniority would be by the date someone entered the quorum and not by the date ordained.

3 "Does a man's being a Prophet in this Church prove that he shall be the President of it? I answer, no! A man may be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and it may have nothing to do with his being the President of the Church. Suffice it to say, that Joseph was the President of the Church, as long as he lived; the people chose to have it so." (JD 1:133)

4 Gospel Standards, p. 11.

5 Heber J. Grant, Improvement Era, July 1939.

6 Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power (D. Michael Quinn), Appendix 2 – Heber J. Grant / Mormon Experience, p. 659.

qualified to direct Brother Woolley who was faithfully abiding in that law."[7]

This principle was reiterated by the Lord in a revelation to President Taylor in October 1882, which called Heber J. Grant and two others to greater positions of authority:

> "Thus saith the Lord to the Twelve, and to the Priesthood and people of my Church: ...
>
> You may appoint Seymour B. Young to fill up the vacancy in the presiding quorum of Seventies, if he will conform to my law: For it is not meet that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my Priesthood; ...
>
> For my Priesthood, whom I have called and whom I have sustained and honored, shall honor one and obey my laws, and the laws of my Holy Priesthood, or they shall not be considered worthy to hold my Priesthood, saith the Lord."[8]

The law which Seymour Young was not living that the Lord required him to before he could preside was Celestial (Plural) Marriage. At the time he had only one wife (Ann Riter), but in order to keep this law he later married again (Abbie Wells). John Taylor made it clear how he understood the revelation himself when he stated on the day he received it, "A man obeying a lesser law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law."[9]

In accordance with these divine instructions Heber married two additional wives (his first being Lucy Stringham whom he married in 1877, Huldah Winters and Emily Wells a day apart in May 1884. Thus he began to qualify to fulfill his responsibilities as an Apostle of the Lord.

Even with his call to the Apostleship, at least one of the Quorum of Twelve, John Henry Smith, continued to doubt his spiritual qualifications and complained that Heber did not have "a testimony of the truth."[10] Worries about Grant's testimony and intentions continued, and L. John Nuttall (secretary to Wilford Woodruff) later commented that he worried "for the welfare of the Church and kingdom" as, in his opinion, "financial matters [had] more weight with ... Brother Heber J. Grant than the things of the Kingdom."[11] Others worried about Grant's mental health, as he had suffered a nervous breakdown just prior to being an Apostle, and would suffer more later in life.[12] Despite these concerns he remained a member of the Quorum of Twelve.

Just as he had later publicly admitted he didn't have a testimony when he was a Stake President, as an Apostle he confided privately in his fellow Quorum members that he "had never had an inspired dream in his life" and that he had never seen his deceased father (although it was later claimed that he had done so earlier in 1883). He further revealed in 1898 that he had never seen Jesus nor heard his voice.

In 1890 after much pressure from the American government, who no longer even recognized the existence of the LDS Church, President Wilford Woodruff issued a press release we now call the Manifesto asking members to refrain from breaking the laws of the land in their marriages. To many members this seemed to be the end of Celestial Plural Marriage, but others did not place the same importance on the law of the land or press releases, when compared to the laws of God. President Woodruff himself had prophesied two years earlier that the Saints wouldn't, "quit practicing Plural Marriage until Christ shall come,"[13] which Grant recorded in his journal at the time.

Eleven years after the Manifesto Lorenzo Snow encouraged Heber to secretly take another wife.[14] Accordingly he approached Fanny Woolley (the sister of John W. Woolley) that year and asked her to marry him. She, however, felt more impressed with Stake President George Parkinson (already a post-Manifesto polygamist), and became his plural wife a year later.[15] By 1903 a warrant was out for his arrest for continuing to live plural marriage, and he was given an assignment in England to enable him to flee the country. Before he did so, George F. Gibbs, the secretary to the First Presidency reiterated that he should try to take another wife whilst there, but there

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7 Joseph Musser's 'autobiographical' journal, p. 68-9

8 Revelation to John Taylor, 13 October 1882. Unpublished Revelations 83:1,4-5,15. This was published as a pamphlet by the Church, and in Swedish, German and Danish versions of the Doctrine and Covenants.

9 Life of Wilford Woodruff, Matthias F. Cowley, p. 542

10 Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power (D. Michael Quinn), 13 October 1882, p. 780.

11 L. John Nuttall Journal, 5 October 1888.

12 Franics M. Lyman journal, 7 January 1882.

13 Heber J. Grant Journal, 17 May 1888. See also John Henry Smith Journal

14 Heber J. Grant to Joseph F. Smith, 5 Jan. 1906, Grant Papers, LDS Church Archives; Grant, May-June 1901 Notebook, 26 May 1901.

15 See Matthias F. Cowley trial.

is no record but rumor that he ever did[16]

He did remain living with his existing plural wives however, and in 1899 even had to go to court and pay a fine for breaking the 'unlawful cohabitation' law against plural marriage.[17] But by 1908, with the death of his wife Emily, he found himself a monogamist again.

Following the death of Joseph F. Smith, on the 23rd of November 1918, Anthon H. Lund proposed Heber J. Grant as Church President, Grant then chose him as a counselor, then Lund set apart Grant. After which Lund was sustained President of the Council of Twelve.[18] Thus he became the first President of the Church who was monogamous during his presidency. In fact, he claimed at least twice in General Conference that "no man living [had] authority to solemnize plural marriage"[19] Where those keys went he did not say.

From having once been a supporter of the rights of polygamists, as Church President he seemed to see them as criminals that should be punished. In the April 1931[20] Conference, for example he promised to assist in prosecuting post-Manifesto polygamists, although as before noted, he himself tried to take a wife after the Manifesto and was prosecuted for continuing to live polygamously after that time.

A couple of years later, a "final Manifesto" which had been prepared by J. Reuben Clark and signed by Grant was read aloud in every congregation and seemed to once-and-for-all end any official approval or overlooking of plural marriage by Church leaders. The statement was full of many factual errors, however, as it stated that a revelation from John Taylor commanding the uninterrupted continuation of plural marriage was not in the Church archives and was unknown to President Grant (although he had been at at least two meetings where it had been discussed in decades previously,[21] and Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. had seen it in the archives himself before that time).[22] The statement also alleged that "celestial Marriage ... and plural marriage are not synonymous terms" which contradicted the teachings of all Church Presidents prior to Grant.[23]

President Grant's statements against that principle would also turn to actual persecution. In 1935 the Utah legislature made "unlawful cohabitation" a felony for the first time, punishable by up to 5 years in prison (even the anti-polygamous territorial law had made it only a misdemeanor). This law was drafted by Hugh B. Brown (LDS Stake President, and later an Apostle, undoubtedly with the approval of the Church.

In 1944 husbands were taken from their wives and children from their mothers without there ever being any evidence of abuse, but simply for the crime of believing and practicing what they believed to be celestial plural marriage. The world was shocked and horrified at the images of innocent children being torn from their loving families, and the actions were almost universally condemned – except by the Church and it's Deseret News which applauded the raids and court cases.[24]

In the middle of May 1945, some of those men who believed they were clinging to early Mormon doctrines, and whose families the Church had once encouraged in living their way life, were put in jail, and the last hope of Heber J. Grant was fulfilled in which he said, "I shall rejoice when the Government officials put a few of these [polygamists] in the county jail or the state penitentiary."[25] His joy though, was short lived, as he died the next day. His legacy being that he had ended his life fighting against the very thing which his father and others risked their lives to keep alive.

It is hard to imagine what could have prompted President Grant to change his views and attitudes so completely against the very principle he was born into, and which all Church Presidents before him had been persecuted because of. Perhaps a statement he made in 1938 may give some clue as to what swayed his mind. He stated in the November of that year that he found his "greatest happiness" "in the good will and friendship" from "all classes of people" and denominations, instead of "persecution and bitterness."[26] To some this statement may seem harmless enough, but we see it in it's true light when we compare it to a warning given almost half a century

16 Heber J. Grant to Joseph F. Smith, 5 Jan. 1906

17 Salt Lake Tribune, 9 September 1899 (his last child was evidence).

18 See Dialogue, Vol.20, No.2, p.53

19 October 1926 & April 1921.

20 4 April 1933.

21 Heber J. Grant Journal, 30 September 1890; First Presidency Office Journal, 2 October 1889. Minutes of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, 22 February & 1 March 1911 & 23 January 1914.

22 He copied it on 3 August 1909.

23 See D&C 132:3-4,6,21,27,32; Revelation to Wilford Woodruff, 26 January 1880, Unpublished Revelations 79:32; Revelations to John Taylor, 25 June 1882 & September 1886, Unpublished Revelations 80:21-22 & 8:7-8.

24 See Salt Lake Tribune, 8 March 1944.

25 27 November 1928, Letter to Joseph W. Musser (original in the possession of Ivan Neilson).

26 Salt Lake Tribune, 22 Nov 1938. See also Conference Report, Apr. 4, 1920, p. 12.

earlier by Brigham Young - "When the spirit of persecution, the spirit of hatred, of wrath and malice ceases in the world against this people, it will be the time that this people have apostatized and joined hands with the wicked, and never until then; which I pray may never come."[27]

This change has since been praised by subsequent Church leaders such as Elder John J. Carmack, who related his happiness that, "During his tenure, President Heber J. Grant moved us into the modern era. We were no longer in isolation. We became a part of the world, the business community, the intellectual community. That was a major corner that we turned."[28] How quickly it seems that we have forgotten the words of Jesus that "friendship with the world is enmity with God."[29]

The approval and acceptance of the world is an intoxicating thing, and led not only to the Church giving up plural marriage but to many other principles and questionable actions. To give a few examples -

In 1921 Grant authorizes a change in Priesthood ordination, to remove the conferral of the Priesthood,[30] which directly conflicted with instructions given by his predecessor, Joseph F. Smith, given in 1901.[31]

This was not the only such change. Two years later, the garment was substantially changed,[32] in direct opposition to strict instructions President Smith have a only a few years earlier, that any such alterations would invalidate the garment completely.[33] According to one account, Heber Grant reasoned that, "The changes in the garment were neither by revelation nor inspiration, but to please the sisters, and encourage the young people to go through the Temple"[34] This was followed a few years later by several changes in the temple ceremony itself, and in the administration and meaning of the highest ordinance, the Second Anointing.[35]

Not content with altering the ordinances of the temple, in 1923 President Grant mortgaged the temple and put in the hands of the world in order to support a sugar business! To take out a $30 million loan (for fifty years) he used Temple Square as collateral.[36]

Brother Heber also taught a new doctrine, that we should follow Church leaders even if they may be wrong, and we will still be blessed for it. Even though he himself had once taught that "Next to the committing of sin, there is no more fruitful cause of apostasy among the Latter-day Saints than when we put our trust in the arm of flesh."[37] Yet he told a young Marion G. Romney that, "My boy, you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it."[38]

It seems that more changes in the Church occurred during his tenure, than any other Church President, nearly all of them to remove by policy what previous prophets had established by revelation. This biography may seem overly negative about Heber J. Grant, but it has been written to show that whatever qualifications he had as a businessman, that as a Prophet he has been found wanting. Yet if we are to look for the true successor of Joseph F. Smith, one who stood against the world and stood up for true principles despite persecution then we need to look elsewhere.

Nevertheless, we must remember that the Lord must have called Heber J. Grant for a reason. There are many good things he did during his administration, such as the welfare program, and of course the Church members generally also bear some responsibility for the course the Church took at the time, as so many wanted the changes that occurred, and President Grant to some extent was acting on their behalf. There are many statements he made as an Apostle that we would do well to follow (and we can only wish he had followed himself):

"No matter what restrictions we may be placed under by men, our only consistent course is to keep the

27 Brigham Young - J.D. 4:327, see 10:273.
28 Elder John J. Carmack, Church News, Jan. 13, 1990.
29 James 4:4
30 23 April 1921. This is changed back 36 years later.
31 Improvement Era 4:394
32 14 June 1923.
33 Improvement Era 9, June 1916: 812.
34 See "Read it and weep" tape/pamphlet, Salt Lake Tribune, 4 June 1923 & George F. Richards & others to the First Pres. and Twelve, 22 Apr. 1936.
35 See David John Buerger, Mysteries of Godliness, p. 157 & 164
36 Salt Lake County Recorder's Office, Deed No. 501, 787, Bk. 11 U, page 440, dated Nov. 19, 1923, and recorded Nov. 21, 1923. Issued by Heber J. Grant, Trustee in Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Two other deeds followed: #501,790 and #502,184 also issued by Heber J. Grant. Despite this legal documentation, President Grant publicly denied it had occurred – Deseret News, 4 April 1936.
37 Heber J. Grant, Gospel Standards, p. 31.
38 Conference Report, October 1960, p. 78.

commandments for God. We should, in this regard, place ourselves in the same position as that of the three Hebrews who were cast into the fiery furnace. ... we have but one choice, that is to abide in the law of God, no matter as to the consequence."[39]

39 Heber J. Grant, Deseret News, Apr. 6, 1885.

John W. Woolley – Apostle & Prophet

John Wickersham Woolley was born to Edwin D. and Mary W. Woolley (the first of Edwin's seven wives) in Newlin, Columbia, Pennsylvania on the 30th of December 1831. His father was originally a Quaker farmer, but he was converted to Mormonism in 1837. He would later become Brigham Young's business manager, as well as one of his closest friends, and a Bishop from 1853 to 1881.

Little did his parents know at his birth the important role he would yet fulfill in the history of the Gospel, and that he would one day be a Patriarch, Apostle, Prophet, President of the Priesthood, Successor to Joseph F. Smith, father of a future Prophet, uncle to Church President Spencer W. Kimball, and Apostle's J. Reuben Clark and John W. Taylor, as well as being father-in-law to B.H. Roberts, President of the Seventy.

One of John's earliest memories was that of sitting on the Prophet Joseph's knee. Even at eight years old he was considered sufficiently prepared to receive his Patriarchal Blessing from Joseph Smith Sr, the Presiding Patriarch. In it he was promised he would "be called to responsible stations," that it would involve having to "receive keys", as well as "glory and honor" and "worlds of knowledge and power", and that he would one day "be called the Lord's anointed."

He was chosen to cross the plains with Brigham Young's group of pioneers. In his Blessing as a boy, it had said he would, "yet travel among the mountains of the west" and "bring the sons of Ephraim to the lands of their Inheritance." In fulfillment of this he was among the first to meet the handcart companies in 1856, and in 1860 and 1863 he brought emigrants across the plains himself. On the last occasion Joseph F. Smith acted as the chaplain in his 'company', and they became lifelong friends, with President Smith having picnics with the Woolley family and speaking at his wife's funeral.

John Woolley held many responsible civil stations, such as Constable, Justice of the Peace, Deputy Sheriff, Deputy Territorial Marshal, and County Commissioner. Within the Nauvoo Legion (in the territory of Deseret) he served as a Lieutenant, Captain, Sergeant and Major. He participated in the Black Hawk War, and was one of the ten who crossed the Little Mountain to meet Johnston's Army in 1857.

Having been ordained a High Priest by Brigham Young, He served on a Bishopric, as a High Councillor in the Davis Stake, and was later ordained a Patriarch. He also was an ordinance worker in the Salt Lake Temple, and he opened General Conference with prayer on more than one occasion. He was sealed to his first wife Julia E. Sirls in March 1851 and was Endowed at the same time. He went on later to marry Ann Everington in 1886, and in 1910 married Annie Fisher, Joseph F. Smith performing the ceremony.

When John Taylor was in hiding there were very few homes in which he felt his safety was secure, and very few people in whom he placed his confidence.[1] John Woolley was one of these men, and his son Lorin acted as a messenger and sometimes a bodyguard for President John Taylor. It was in John Woolley's home that Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith visited President Taylor on the night of September 26th, 1886, and on the following day set five men apart (including John, his son, and George Q. Cannon) as Apostles, with a special commission to keep alive Celestial Plural Marriage, and the authority to set apart others similarly.[2]

As John Taylor prophesied he was cut off from the Church for performing the mission he had been called to, as were many of those who kept their covenant to keep alive God's laws after the Church had abandoned them. But he continued to carry out this mission under the direction of those who presided over him[3] until just before the death of Joseph F. Smith in 1918.[4] After President Smith's life ended, the responsibility fell upon Woolley (he being the most senior Apostle worthy and willing to keep alive all of the Gospel) of presiding over those keys and ordinances that the Church had rejected, just as his Patriarchal Blessing had predicted.

After John W. Woolley's death in 1928, his son Lorin succeeded him as President of the Priesthood, and to see that the work of God continued he called Apostles to ensure the fullness of Priesthood remained upon the earth, and its ordinances in the manner God had restored them to Joseph originally. This authority has continued to the present day.

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1 Martha Hughes Cannon (the first U.S. female senator, wife of Angus M. Cannon, Pres of Salt Lake Stake) also hid at the Woolley home, after the birth of her daughter Elizabeth Rachel, whilst her husband was in hiding for living plural marriage.

2 Within a couple of weeks of this he married the widowed mother of B.H. Roberts.

3 17 November 1909 - Anthony W. Ivins sends Warren Longhurt & Eva Allred to John Woolley to perform their plural marriage ceremony. ("A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Mary Evelyn Clark Allred," Star of Truth 2:301-2)

4 "John told me that within two months of President Smith's death [1918] President Smith told him to go ahead in his mission of sealing plural marriages." (Edwin D. Woolley Jr. Reminiscence dictated to Elizabeth Woolley Jensen, March 1920)

Early Testimonies of John W. Woolley's Calling

Some have claimed that it was only John's son Lorin who had or claimed authority

John told me that within two months of President Smith's death *[1918]* President Smith told him to go ahead in his mission of sealing plural marriages.

Edwin D. Woolley Jr. Reminiscence dictated to Elizabeth Woolley Jensen, March 1920.

Met a most distinguished man of whom I have heard much - Brother John Woolley of Centerville who is the eldest (senior) member of the Church living. He is also an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, having been ordained to such by Pres. John Taylor. He was a personal friend of the prophet Joseph Smith and Pres. Jos. F. as well. He is 91 years old and still hale and hearty and is the Father of Bro. Lorin Woolley of whom much will be said in the future.

Joseph Lyman Jessop Journal, 8 April 1923.

"In 1928, I had the privilege of visiting John W. Woolley, and hearing his testimony."

Sermons of LeRoy S. Johnson 5:241, 18 March 1962

...

"He told me to go and sit down, and I did. He says, "Now I know that I am among friends." And he opened up and told me of the revelation of 1886 and the eight-hour meeting."

Sermons of LSJ 4:1576, 3 June 1978

[John W. Woolley] took me [Price W. Johnson] into the room on the south where the Savior and Joseph Smith in his resurrected body had their long interview with John Taylor on the night of September 26, 1886. John Woolley said, "This is the room where the Savior and Joseph Smith visited. The couch over there is where they sat. The Savior was here until midnight; Joseph Smith stayed until morning …." Brother Woolley told me about the meeting the next morning; he told me the whole story which is written.

Reminiscences of John W. Woolley and Lorin C. Woolley, Vol. 2:5-6